Guidelines for completing the Project Description Section of the NEPA Determination and CE Forms

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The following is guidance on what should be included in the Project Description for a Federal Aid Transportation Project. The Project Description must contain complete sentences and must be written so the public, who are not familiar with the project, can understand the project details.

An accurate Project Description provides the foundation of activities that will be analyzed for environmental clearance. The Project Description defines the project footprint and location, existing facilities, construction activities, and types of improvements so the FHWA and other state and federal resource agencies can understand the full effects of the project on both the natural and human environment. Final Plans cannot show improvements or work activities that have not been summarized in the Project Description. If the Project Description does not include all project activities when environmental clearance is sought, the project could experience delays as information not previously included in the Project Description has to be re-submitted for environmental clearance.

Project Descriptions must be written so a member of the general public who has no prior knowledge of the project can understand what the project entails, without the benefit of looking at a plan set. Nomenclature and terms typically used in engineering plans and roadway projects may not be understood by the public. If possible, avoid use of station/offset to describe locations. This may not be possible for areas of new or shifted alignment. If specific locations need to be described, use mile marker or cardinal directions from a landmark, intersection, or other geographical feature to locate specific areas or items (i.e., *"A right-turn lane will be constructed in the southwest corner of the US75/N8 intersection to accommodate the eastbound to southbound turn movement"*).

For the purposes of the Project Description, the numerical value for mile marker is equivalent to the reference post value. Substitute a decimal point for the "+" symbol when reporting a reference post as a mile marker. Spell out the words "feet" and "inches". Do not use abbreviations or tick marks for units of measure. When appearing for the first time in a project description, any acronym (i.e., ADA, MM, SWPPP, etc.) should initially be spelled out with the acronym following in parenthesis. For any subsequent use in the project description, the actual acronym can be used. First use of the term "3R" should be as follows: *3R (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation).* Any subsequent use in the Project Description can appear as "*3R*".

The Project Description should be written with general project information provided in paragraph form. General information includes project type and location, description of existing facility, and project scope. Details related to work and construction items outlined in the project scope should be provided in a bulleted list.

The first paragraph should contain the following information:

Project Type - Indicate the design standard(s) under which the project will be constructed. The following terms shall be used to describe the design standard: 3R, Pavement Preservation, New, or Reconstructed. If portions of the project will be built to a different design standard, include it in discussion of project type.

Project Length – Report project length in miles. If project has two or more individual segments that are not adjacent, indicate the length in miles for each segment.

Highway Number – Indicate the numbered highway name. Discussion of functional classification and facility type (i.e. Interstate, freeway, etc.) is not required.

Governmental Boundaries - Indicate the county or counties in which the project is located. Also include the municipality if the project is located either wholly or partly within or near a municipality.

Project Limits - Use mile marker (MM) when describing beginning and end points of the project. If a project begins or ends near a junction with another named or numbered road, indicate this in the discussion of the project limits along with the cardinal direction in which the junction is located in relation to the beginning and end points. If a project limit is defined by a change in pavement type (i.e., asphalt to concrete), report as needed.

Example: *"This 3R (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation) project will resurface 6.45 miles of US-30 located in Keith County, starting just east of the Jct. of US-30 with US-138 where the pavement changes from asphalt to concrete at mile marker (MM) 107.86, and extends east towards Brule to where the pavement changes from concrete to asphalt at MM 114.31."*

Second paragraph:

Description of Existing Roadway - Number of lanes and lane width, shoulder width and shoulder surfacing width, and section type (urban or rural). Include all existing roadway sections that will be improved.

Example: *"The existing roadway in the rural portion of this project consists of two 12 foot wide asphalt lanes, 2 foot wide surfaced shoulders, and total shoulder widths of 8 feet. The existing roadway in the urban portion of Maywood consists of a 36 foot wide back of curb to back of curb section. The existing roadway in the urban portion of Curtis consists of a 40 foot wide back of curb to back of curb section."*

Third paragraph:

Improvements – Statement of the project scope and general construction activities. If multiple typical sections exist throughout a project, describe the scope of work associated with each section.

Example: *"The improvements on this project will consist of making repairs to the existing concrete pavement, resurfacing existing surfaced shoulders with asphalt, trench widening where surfaced shoulders don't exist, and resurfacing with asphalt."*

Scope Details:

A bulleted list of statements describing of the work and construction items specific to the project. Areas of work described may include the following: grading (permanent and temporary); alignment shift(s)/new alignment; culvert construction and/or extension; bridge removal, repair, replacement and/or other improvements; erosion control; erosion control curb and flumes; storm sewer; utility work; guardrail update/replacement; pavement repair work (joint repair, crack sealing, etc.); pavement removal; subgrade stabilization; lighting; traffic signals; pavement markings; retaining walls; sidewalks/curb ramps; railroad crossings or other improvements.

Discussion of any bridge improvements should include existing and proposed dimensions, structure number, and the feature spanned. Include if temporary crossings or bridges will be used to facilitate constructability in addition to discussion of traffic accommodation.

Additional work or construction items that are standard construction practice or common to a specific project type should also be reported under Scope Details. This includes activities such as: earth shoulder construction; surfacing of driveways and intersections; construction surveying and staking; clearing and grubbing; erosion and sediment control; traffic phasing, flagging, and detours; pavement markings; right-of-way needs; access provided to adjacent properties during construction.

Do not mention wetland, floodplain, or any other environmental impacts or issues in the Project Description. These should be discussed in other areas of the NEPA document. Additionally, detailed discussion of the pavement strategy, such as depth of milling/surfacing, is not required. If the project includes any widening or a net increase in surfacing area, proposed dimensions (i.e., lane and shoulder widths) should be reported.

Example Project Description for a Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation Project

Project Description: This 3R (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation) project will resurface 7.57 miles of N-23 in Frontier County, starting at the south Junction of N-23 with US-83 at mile marker (MM) 84.05, and extending east to the west edge of Curtis where the pavement changes from concrete to asphalt at mile marker 91.62.

The existing roadway in the rural portion of this project consists of two 12 foot wide asphalt lanes, 2 foot wide surfaced shoulders, and total shoulder widths of 8 feet. The existing roadway in the urban portion of Maywood consists of a 36 foot wide back of curb to back of curb section. The existing roadway in the urban portion of Curtis consists of a 40 foot wide back of curb to back of curb section.

The improvements on the rural portion of this project will consist of milling the existing asphalt roadway and resurfacing with asphalt. A short segment of the rural portion has existing concrete under the asphalt. This concrete will be repaired prior to the milling and resurfacing. The improvements in the urban portion of Maywood will consist of milling the existing asphalt between the concrete curb and gutters and resurfacing with asphalt. The improvements in the

urban portion of Curtis will consist of milling the existing asphalt between the concrete curb and gutters and resurfacing with asphalt. There is a short segment of existing concrete pavement with curb and gutters that will be milled prior to resurfacing with asphalt.

Scope details include:

- Existing cable guardrail will be removed and replaced. Minor grading will be required.
- The existing 216 foot long and 24 foot wide bridge over Medicine Creek (Structure # S023 08874) will be removed except for the abutments. The abutments will be modified to accommodate a new 219 foot long by 40 foot wide bridge. The new bridge centerline will be 3 foot south and approximately 2.5 feet higher in elevation than the existing bridge centerline. New guardrail will be built. Grading will be required. The contractor will be allowed to construct two temporary contractor crossings for the construction of the new bridge and removal of the existing bridge.
- Due to the higher elevation for the bridge approximately one quarter of a mile will be reconstructed with asphalt.
- The bridge rail on the bridge over Wells Canyon (Structure # S023 09088) will be remodeled. The deck will be milled, a membrane placed on the bridge deck and overlaid with concrete. New guardrail will be built. Minor grading will be required.
- Drainage work at MM 84.38 will be required to repair a large washout where two pipes outlet. The two pipes will be extended to a manhole structure which will collect the water and drop it down to the outlet elevation of the adjacent waterway. Grading will be required.
- Drainage work at MM 89.70 will be required to stop the erosion of the roadway's slopes by adding an area inlet to capture runoff and pipe it into an existing culvert pipe. The slopes will also be stabilized.
- One curb inlet in Maywood will be replaced.
- In Maywood and Curtis the existing concrete curb and gutter will be repaired. Curb ramps will be built or updated to meet ADA requirements.
- One driveway culvert pipe will be replaced.
- The railroad crossing at MM 88.37 will be replaced.
- Curb and flumes will be built on the low side of one curve.
- The existing earth shoulders will be brought up to match the new asphalt.
- Existing surfaced driveways and intersections will be resurfaced.
- Rock or gravel will be placed behind driveways and intersections to match the new asphalt.
- Due to the scope of this project surveying and staking will be required.
- Clearing and grubbing will be required for the above mentioned grading.
- Areas disturbed during construction will be stabilized utilizing methods of erosion control as shown in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
- During the bridge replacement, repair, and concrete overlay at MM 88.74 & MM 90.88, one-lane traffic will be controlled by temporary traffic signals. The remainder of this project will be constructed under traffic with any temporary lane closures controlled by flagging.

- Lane markings will be applied to all new surfacing.
- New right-of-way and temporary easements will be required to build this project.
- Access to adjacent properties will be maintained during construction.

Questions: Contact Allison Zach, NDOR Environmental Analyst II, (402) 479-3632, allison.m.zach@nebraska.gov, or the Local Projects Division Project Coordinator with any questions.